

WAR TOURISM: TRIPS TO UKRAINE ARE ON OFFER



According to Ukrainian government data, about 2 million foreigners crossed the Ukrainian border in 2022, significantly less than the 14 million who traveled to the country before the pandemic. Still, the number of people choosing a trip to Ukraine may seem quite high.

War tourism has always been popular among a relatively small group of people choosing countries at war as their holiday destination. Traveling to Ukraine is possible without restrictions as the country's borders are open to foreigners, and Europeans do not need a visa to enter.

However, if you opt for traveling by train or bus, it may be a grueling journey, taking at least one full day to reach places like Kyiv. The trains are often overcrowded. **Additionally, you may experience long waiting times when leaving Ukraine by bus due to precise E.U. customs controls.**

There has been a global debate about whether it's ethical to vacation in a country currently at war. Travel companies' offers are ambiguous. Tour operators organizing trips to Ukraine claim that they only offer safe tours to tourists, wherein the visitors only travel to areas far away from the war zone. These areas include the capital and the central and western regions of Ukraine.

It is worth noting that some tour organizers who offer trips to Ukraine are based in Poland. They believe that their efforts contribute to Ukraine's victory in its ongoing war.

Moreover, foreign tourists visiting the country during these challenging times have psychological impact on the locals. They react positively and perceive it as a gesture of solidarity. Naturally, hotel and restaurant owners in Ukraine are also delighted with the increased business of war tourism.

There is little enthusiasm, understanding, or support for war tourism and tour organizers operating in Ukraine from official bodies. The head of the State Tourism Development Agency, Mariana Oleskiv, stated, "We do not support this type of tourism." **She emphasized that safety is of the utmost importance.** As a government agency, they do not recommend foreign visitors travel to any destinations in Ukraine if there is an ongoing war.

Some of the hints from tour operators offering trips to Ukraine sound like pure cynicism. For example, war risk insurance and an air alarm app are recommended.

Date: 2023-10-02

Article link: <https://www.tourism-review.com/war-tourism-attracts-visitors-to-ukraine-news13746>